



## A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL FACTORS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: EVIDENCE FROM LIBYAN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR

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### Abstract:

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of personal factors on organizational commitment among selected employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector. Using random sampling technique, 168 employees were selected from public technical institutes located in different cities of Libya. The following personal factors were selected for this study: age group, gender, marital status, educational level and tenure. Five hypotheses were tested to explore the relation between the mentioned personal factors and employees' commitment to their Institutes. In this study, organizational commitment scale of Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) was used to measuring the employees' organizational commitment level. The scale consists of three dimensions as affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Result showed that personal factors have clear and significant effect on the Libyan employees' organizational commitment with their institutes.

**Keywords:** organizational commitment, personal factors and Libyan technical and vocational education sector

### 1. Introduction

Extensive research has demonstrated that personal factors are positively related and have a great effect on organizational commitment of employees (Angle & Perry, 1981, De Gieter, Hofmans & Pepermans 2011; Yildiz, 2017; Jena, 2015; Meyer et al. 2002). These factors play a major and important role in a person's career and they are very important for the organizations employing them. They are so important that according to literature, personal factors even "determine" organizational commitment of individuals or groups (Kumar and Bakhshi, 2010). Many researches have been

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conducted on personal factors but they were conducted from very different perspectives as they describe phenomena other than the effect of personal factors on commitment. Libyan technical and vocational education sector is still in the developing phase; therefore it needs such studies because it is focusing on technical and vocational education standards, which are not quite possible without employee' commitment towards their institutes, and so, this study was conducted to increase understanding of this critical topic. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between personal factors and organizational commitment of selected employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector.

## 2. Literature Review

A section dedicated to the significant literature resources, consulted or employed, that contributed to the study. It surveys scholarly articles, books and other sources (e.g. dissertations, conference proceedings) relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, providing a description, summary, and critical evaluation of each work. The purpose is to offer an overview of significant literature published on a specific topic.

In recent decades, organizational commitment has been studied in many organizations with their different aspects (Kanbur, Özyer & Akyüz, 2017; Kanbur, 2015). Organizational commitment has been a very interesting and objective topic in the whole literature of organizational behavior and organizational psychology for many decades. Employees, who showed higher organizational commitment, exhibited less absenteeism, better performance, and less work-related stress (Vance, 2006; Cohen & Golan, 2007). Organizational commitment means the same as loyalty, which a person shows when he or she loves to remain in the same organization and secondly in his/her current position (Zangaro, 2001). Organizational commitment has a clear link with on-the-job satisfaction (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). Organizational commitment is generally defined as a "psychological/mental state," which urges an employee to prolong its stay/function in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

According to Porter, Crampon, & Smith, (1976) organizational commitment could be defined as sum of feelings and beliefs formed internally or as a set of intentions that enriches an employee's desire to remain with an organization and to accept its major goals and values. Organizational commitment has also been described as a mindset that influences the behavior of an individual and binds the individual to a particular course of action. It characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership of that organization. Irrespective of sources of commitment, it can be affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Researchers like Mowday, Porter & Steers (1982) identified three necessary elements of organizational commitment: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

The organizational commitment has many types. Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993) presented three-component model to explain organizational commitment, and those components depend on psychological states of employees. Meyer and Allen believe that three "mind sets" characterize an employee's commitment to the organization:

**A. Affective Commitment**

This type of commitment shows that the employee has "positive" emotional attachment with the organization. Affectively committed employees actively pursue the organizational goals and have desire to continue working for the organization. This type of commitment depends on personal factors like age, tenure, gender, and education, which can influence an employee but they are not too strong.

**B. Continuance Commitment**

When an employee feels the "need" to work for an organization because benefits of staying with the organization outweigh the costs of changing job, it is termed as continuance commitment. Besides, some people do not consider alternatives or gather enough information about what would happen if they switch their job, so they continue doing the same job.

**C. Normative Commitment**

In this case, the employees stick to their jobs because they psychologically feel that it is their obligation. Feeling obligation is a part of organizational commitment. They think that it is their moral and ethical duty to continue with their jobs because their organizations provide them with opportunity to work, pay for their training, and afford their medical expenditure, so they feel that it is kind of "debt" they are repaying in the form of normative commitment.

This kind of behavior may be a result of a person's own ethics and values or his family values. It is observed that some cultures and families teach their members to remain loyal to their employers. Sometimes, employees continue working for their employer organization because they have nowhere else to go. As discussed earlier, organizational commitment binds employees with their innate desire to continue serving their organization. This commitment makes the employees show better performance. Good values and belief in organization's objectives can be inculcated through introducing training programs and adding rewards and benefits to the regular salary packages of employees. This helps the organization grow at a faster pace (Fred & Luthans, 2002).

Numerous studies established positive and significant relation between an employee's age and his/her organizational commitment (Steers, 1977; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Angle & Perry, 1981; Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994; Kasshun, 2005). Later, Sommer, Bae & Luthans (1996) acknowledged the validity of the above-mentioned studies when they pointed out that employees' organizational commitment increases as they age. Critics think that older employees do not have many job offers and that is why, they stick to their jobs (Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018). Moreover, experience gives them realism, which helps them understand and cope with the needs of work situations (Moday et al., 1982; Parasuraman & Nachman, 1987). Therefore, the following hypothesis was constructed:

**H1:** There is a significant difference between employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector towards organizational commitment according to their age.

A person's marriage affects his/her approach towards work and affects his/her organizational commitment as well (Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018). Currently the available literature on relation between marital status and organizational commitment is inadequate and limited; however, researchers identified marriage as a control variable (Abdulla & Shaw, 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Experts argued that since married people have financial needs, responsibilities, and needs for security, they are more likely to show organizational commitment than single people or people in non-committed relationships (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Tsui, Leung, Cheung, Mok, & Ho, 1994; Abdull & Shaw, 1999; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Therefore, the following hypothesis was constructed:

**H2:** There is a significant difference between employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector towards organizational commitment according to their marital status.

Many studies have been conducted on the role gender plays towards organizational commitment but the results were largely inconsistent as some studies deemed gender as significant while others termed it insignificant towards organizational commitment (Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018). Salami (2008) and Konya, Matić and Pavlović (2016) claimed that no significant difference exists between gender and organizational commitment; therefore, we cannot decide whether being a man or woman results in better or more sincere organizational commitment.

On the other hand, Akintayo (2010) found negative relationship between organizational commitment and gender, and he refuted Salami's claim. His study showed that male employees do not commit towards their organization the way female employees do. The study also shows that women employees have limited tendencies to change their jobs as compared to their male colleagues. Male employees, who had less commitment towards their families, were more loyal and committed to their organizations (Abdulla & Shaw, 1999). Therefore, the following hypothesis was constructed:

**H3:** There is a significant difference between employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector towards organizational commitment according to their gender.

Educational level is another aspect, which matters in the pursuit of employees' organizational commitment. González, Sánchez & López-Guzmán (2016); Steers (1977) and Durick (1988) determined that employees with a lower educational level find it difficult to change their jobs; therefore, they are more commitment to their organization as compared to those, who are more educated. Based on these findings, we can claim that education plays a major role towards organizational commitment (Mubarak, Wahab and Khan, 2012; Keramati, Horri and Afzalipoor, 2013). However, other studies found that level of education was not related to organizational commitment (Balfour

and Wechsler, 1996; Chughtai and Zafar, 2006). Therefore, the following hypothesis was constructed:

**H4:** There is a significant difference between employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector towards organizational commitment according to their educational levels.

Researches showed that people, who spent more time with an organization, have more organizational commitment as compared to those, who spent less time. Empirical evidence shows positive link between organizational commitment and tenure but even now, it is unclear how it operates (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Abdulla & Shaw, 1999; Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994). Meyer and Allen (1997) claimed when a person stays as a member of an organization for considerably long time, his/her emotional attachment increases and that does not let him/her switch the job. They also suggest that there is a positive relationship between tenure and organizational commitment mainly because uncommitted employees do not continue working for an organization for long time and they are prone to leave at any uncomfortable moment. Thus, there is no doubt on positive correlation between tenure and employees' commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Abdulla & Shaw, 1999). Therefore, the following hypothesis was constructed:

**H5:** There is a significant difference between employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector towards organizational commitment according to their tenure.

### 3. Material and Methods

This study sought to examine organizational commitment of selected employees at Libyan technical and vocational education sector in terms of their personal factors. The total population consists of 168 Libyan institutes employees, who participated in this study including 95 (67.9 %) males and 45 (32.1 %) females. The questionnaire used in this study had two sections. The first section was designed to collect basic information of the participants, which shows the category they belong to with respect to their personal factors. The second section was designed to find out the extent of their organizational commitment, and we used 18-item organizational commitment questionnaire originally designed by Meyer et al. (1993), which is based on scores according to type of commitment (affective, continuance, and normative).

#### 3.1 Reliability Analysis of the Organizational Commitment Scale

Based on Table 1: The Corrected Item-Total Correlation is used to measure correlation between each question of the scale with the rest of the scale's questions. When the correlation is low for the question, this indicates that question isn't measuring the concept the rest of the scale is trying to measure. In this paper, is not low for any question. In addition, it can also be seen that A Cronbach's coefficient alpha of  $\geq 0.60$ , which is .814, this means that the Cronbach's coefficient alpha (.814) of the organizational commitment scale indicates that the organizational commitment scale

has a high degree of the internal consistency. That is, the current organizational commitment scale measures the organizational commitment behavior in the Libyan context. Nevertheless, if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is less than 0.60, there will be a requirement to use the procedure of Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted; however, in this study there is no need to use this procedure, because the current Cronbach's alpha coefficient is more than 0.60.

**Table 1:** Item-Total Statistics of Organizational Commitment

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Organizational Commitment, Cronbach's Alpha= .814				
OC1	61.24	127.230	.727	.908
OC2	61.19	133.274	.543	.913
OC3	60.95	129.121	.730	.909
OC4	61.37	129.917	.604	.912
OC5	61.34	130.501	.681	.910
OC6	60.99	127.471	.762	.908
OC7	61.06	130.090	.639	.911
OC8	61.42	128.232	.658	.910
OC9	61.61	126.718	.660	.910
OC10	61.43	133.262	.478	.915
OC11	61.22	145.475	-.018	.927
OC12	61.35	135.752	.337	.919
OC13	61.40	128.663	.677	.910
OC14	61.50	130.817	.561	.913
OC15	61.39	128.152	.689	.909
OC16	61.16	130.366	.672	.910
OC17	61.25	132.422	.599	.912
OC18	61.14	128.863	.673	.910

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Analysis of the personal factors

This section investigates the current factors of the current study participants. Table 2 demonstrates the personal factors of the survey respondents. The study participants were categorized into the following five groups according to gender, age, status, education and tenure. Of the 168 total study respondents, the first largest participant group was men (88.1% or 148 male) see Table 2. Nevertheless, the female participant group was small compared with male group (11.9% or 20 female) see Table 2. This may indicate that the majority of employees in the Libyan context were males.

The personal factors according to age group are provided in Table 2. Approximately 17.2 % of the total study population were classified within 18-34 years old; 31.5 %, 35-44 years old; and finally, about 51.3 % of the total study population were classified within more than 44 years old. Therefore, it can conclude that more than 44 years old-group accounted for approximately half of the total study population. In

terms of status, the largest participant group was married (90.4 % or 152 married participants) see Table 2. Nevertheless, the single participant group was small compared with married group (9.6 % or 16 single participant). According to the Table 2, the high percentage of the education level was 45.2 % master degree, followed by doctorate degree that forms 33.3 %. In terms of tenure measuring by the number of years, it can be noticed that 14.3 % of the total study population were classified within 1-5 years; 23.9 % of the participants were within 6-10 years; 35.7 % of the participants were within the 11-20 years and finally, about 26.1 % of the total participants were classified within more than 20 years.

**Table 1: Personal Factors of the Sample**

Attribute	Factors	N	(%)
Gender	Male	148	88.1
	Female	20	11.9
Status	Married	152	90.4
	Single	16	9.6
Age	18-34 years	29	17.2
	35-44 years	53	31.5
	More than 44	86	51.3
Education	High school	30	17.9
	University degree	6	3.6
	Master degree	76	45.2
	Doctorate degree	56	33.3
Tenure	1-5 years	24	14.3
	6-10 years	40	23.9
	11-20 years	60	35.7
	More than 20 years	44	26.1
Total		168	100.0

## 4.2. Testing the Study Hypotheses

### 4.2.1 One Way Analysis of Variance of the First Hypothesis

Table 3 shows the Analysis of Variance Test. Table 3 displays the differences in the organizational commitment according to the age variable. According to the Table 3, it can be noticed that there is difference between age groups in terms of recognizing the importance of organizational commitment. That is, ( $H_1$ ) is accepted, which states that there is a difference between age groups towards organizational commitment. As the importance of these differences will be shown in the Table 4.

**Table 3: ANOVA of the Age Variable**

Organizational Commitment					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.703	2	.352	.349	.706
Within Groups	166.297	165	1.008		
Total	167.000	167			

It can be concluded from the Table 4 that the 18-34 years group or participants take the view that the organizational commitment is very important in the organization. That is, based on Table 4, the mean of the 18-34 years group is higher than 44 years and more groups. In fact, the highlighted difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 4:** Multiple Comparisons of the Age Variable

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
18-34 years	35-44 years	3.3909	.95258	.13935	.820
	More than 44	3.4261	1.03983	.00015	1.000
35-44 years	18-34 years	3.5783	.98566	-.13935	.820
	More than 44	3.4261	1.03983	-.13919	.707
More than 44	18-34 years	3.5783	.98566	-.00015	1.000
	35-44 years	3.3909	.95258	.13919	.707

#### 4.2.2 T-Test of the Second Hypothesis

Table 5 shows the independent samples test. Table 5 displays the differences in the organizational commitment according to the status variable. According to the Table 5, (H<sub>2</sub>) is accepted and supported. That is, it can be noticed that there is a little difference between married and single participants in terms of recognizing the organizational commitment. Thus, it can be concluded from the Table 5 that the single participants have (mean=3.4062) a little strong the organizational commitment than married participants (mean=3.4057).

**Table 5:** Independent Samples Test of the Status Variable

Variable	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	Married	152	3.4057	.94137	0.054
	Single	16	3.4062	1.40185	

#### 4.2.3 T-Test of the Third Hypothesis

Table 6 shows the Independent Samples Test. Table 6 displays the differences in the organizational commitment according to the gender variable. According to the Table 6, (H<sub>3</sub>) is accepted. Namely, it can be noticed that there is a difference between male and female participants in terms of recognizing the organizational commitment. Thus, it can be concluded from the Table 6 that the female participants have (mean=3.4777) a little strong the organizational commitment than male participants (mean=3.4196).

**Table 6:** Independent Samples Test of the Gender Variable

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	Male	148	3.4196	.99140	.138
	Female	20	3.4777	1.03391	



#### 4.2.4 One Way Analysis of Variance of the Fourth Hypothesis

Table 7 shows the Analysis of Variance Test. Table 7 displays the differences in the organizational commitment according to the education variable. According to the Table 7, it can be noticed that there is difference between educational levels in terms of recognizing the importance of organizational commitment. That is, (H<sub>4</sub>) is accepted, which states that there is a significant difference between educational levels towards organizational commitment. As the importance of these differences will be shown in the Table 8.

**Table 7: ANOVA of the Education Variable**

Organizational Commitment					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.248	3	4.416	4.710	.004
Within Groups	153.752	164	938		
Total	167.000	167			

It can be concluded from the Table 8 that the high school group or participants take the view that the organizational commitment is very important in the organization. That is, based on Table 8, the mean of the high school group is higher than that of doctorate degree group. In fact, the highlighted difference is significant at the 0.05 level. Namely, it can be noticed that there is a significant difference between educational levels participants in terms of recognizing the organizational commitment.

**Table 8: Independent Samples Test of the Education Variable**

Variable	Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	High school	30	3.5759	.91722	.004
	University degree	6	3.1851	.92149	
	Master degree	76	3.4269	.91982	
	Doctorate degree	56	3.1994	1.05875	

#### 4.2.5 One Way Analysis of Variance of the Fifth Hypothesis

Table 9 shows the analysis of variance test. Table 9 displays the differences in the organizational commitment according to tenure variable. According to the Table 9, it can be noticed that there is difference between experience group 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years and more than 20 years in terms of recognizing the importance of organizational commitment. That is, (H<sub>5</sub>) is accepted, which states that there is a significant difference among tenure towards organizational commitment. As the importance of these differences will be shown in the Table 10.

**Table 9:** ANOVA of the Tenure Variable

<b>Organizational Commitment</b>					
	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	9.524	3	3.175	3.306	.022
Within Groups	17.476	164	.960		
Total	167.000	167			

It can be concluded from the Table 10 that the more than 20 years group or participants take the view that the organizational commitment is very important in the organization. That is, based on Table 10, the mean of more than 20 years group is higher than 1-5 years group, as the highlighted difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 10:** Multiple Comparisons of the Experience Variable

<b>(I) Experience</b>	<b>(J) Experience</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Mean Difference (I-J)</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1-5 years	6-10 years	3.6027	.85349	-.54502	.141
	11-20 years	3.4922	1.12383	-.54888	.098
	More than 20 years	3.4088	.94668	-.78007	.011
6-10 years	1-5 years	3.1616	.83435	.54502	.141
	11-20 years	3.4922	1.12383	-.00385	1.000
	More than 20 years	3.4088	.94668	-.23504	.691
11-20 years	1-5 years	3.1616	.83435	.54888	.098
	6-10 years	3.6027	.85349	.00385	1.000
	More than 20 years	3.4088	.94668	-.23118	.635
More than 20 years	1-5 years	3.1616	.83435	.78007	.011
	6-10 years	3.6027	.85349	.23504	.691
	11-20 years	3.4922	1.12383	.23118	.635

In line with this finding, all the hypotheses of this study were accepted.

## 5. Discussion

The study was carried out among 168 employees working at Libyan technical and vocational education sector with an aim of determining the effect of personal factors on organisational commitment. This study offers some important insights into the organizational commitment and fills a gap in the literature by showing the relationship between the personal factors and organizational commitment. Therefore, the findings of this study support and extend previous results (Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Akintayo, 2010; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Abdulla & Shaw, 1999; Mubarak, Wahab and Khan, 2012) showing the correlation between organizational commitment and personal factors especially, age, gender, tenure, marital status, and educational level. In addition, the current findings revealed that, significant difference exists between age groups towards organizational commitment. And it can be noticed that there is difference between age group in terms of recognizing the importance of

organizational commitment. The study emphasizes that the more than 18-34 group or participants take the view that the organizational commitment is very important in the organization, and the mean of employees whose are 18-34 years old are higher than 44 years and more group. In fact, the highlighted difference is significant at the 0.05 level. This finding is right according to findings of other researchers, who reported positive correlation between age and organizational commitment (Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018; Steers, 1977; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Angle & Perry, 1981; Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994; Sommer, Bae & Luthans, 1996). This means that when employee getting older will give more commitment to the institute and vice versa. Since, there are several studies provided an evidence about the correlation between an employee's age and the organizational commitment towards the organization.

The findings also showed that there is relationship between the marital status and the organizational commitment. That is, the current study shows that the single participants have a high level of organizational commitment compared married participants. This finding is not similar to that found in (Abdulla and Shaw, 1999; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) who found that there is an inadequate and limited relationship between marital status and organizational commitment; nevertheless, other researchers (Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972; Tsui, Leung, Cheung, Mok, and Ho, 1994; Abdull and Shaw, 1999) identified that they are more likely to show organizational commitment than single people.

The current study shows that there is a difference between male and female participants in terms of the level of the organizational commitment towards the organization. However, the relevant literature about the relationship between the gender and the organizational commitment is controversial, as the findings are mostly inconsistent (Salami, 2008). Furthermore, the current findings revealed that there is a difference between educational levels participants in terms of the level of organizational commitment. These results are similar to that found in, both Steers (1977) and Durick (1988) who found that employees who have low educational levels, they are more loyal with their organizations. Finally, this study revealed that there is a significant difference among tenure towards organizational commitment. That is, employees 6.10 years-experience have a high level of the organizational commitment towards the organization compared with more than 20 years group. This finding is different from what other scholars' findings (Jena, 2015; Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Abdulla & Shaw, 1999; Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994; Keramati, Horri and Afzalipoor, 2013), as they found out that people, who spent more time with an organization, have a high level of the organizational commitment as compared to those, who spent less time.

## **6. Recommendations**

The researcher hopes that the present study will encourage more studies of organizational commitment to be conducted in Libyan technical and vocational education and other sectors. The following suggestions are therefore offered:

- This study considered personal factors as a potential antecedent to organizational commitment. Other variables including perceived organizational support, job security and teamwork should be explored. It would also be valuable to include variables such as conflict, resistance to change, organizational justice and trust.
- This study was conducted in the Libyan technical and vocational education sector. It should be replicated in other Libyan sectors.
- Finally, t-Test Analysis and One Way Anova Analysis were used to show the link between personal factors with organizational commitment. Future researches may use different methodology.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper is a reinvestigation of the previous findings on organizational commitment specifically in case of Libyan employees. Previous researches claimed that there is a relationship between personal factors and organizational commitment. This empirical study is helpful to the Libyan technical and vocational education sector because this is a growing sector and it needs committed employees. This study contains valuable information for deans of institutes, and human resources managers. Having read this study, they can significantly improve employees' commitment and help improving the attitudes of employees towards their institutes and the management.

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